DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 077 290 FL 004 108

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TITLE	English in Australia.
INSTITUTION	Monash Univ., Clayton, Victoria (Australia).
PUB DATE	71
NOTE	18p.; In Linguistic Communications, 3, 1971
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Analytical Criticism; *Book Reviews; Descriptive Linguistics; Dialect Studies; *English; Language Development; Language Research; Language Styles; Language Usage; *Phonetics; Pidgins; Pronunciation; *Sociolinguistics; Speech
IDENTIFIERS	Australia; New Zealand

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a review of "English Transported: Essays on Australasian English," edited by W. S. Ramson. The book is a collection of articles on the various types of English spoken mainly in Australia and New Zealand. Articles discuss such varieties as nineteenth and twentieth century Australian English, New Zealand English, Pidgin English in New Guinea, migrant English in Australia, informal English in the Torres Straits, spoken versus written English, and Australian English as used by Asian students. The present reviewer considers each article and concentrates on the sociolinguistic and phonetic aspects in each discussion. (VM)

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From: Linguistic Communications, 3, 1971.

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ENGLISH IN AUSTRALIA*

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The purpose of Ramson's book English Transported is to give a picture of the present state of Australian English and New Zealand English studies. As such, it succeeds well in representing the work of established scholars by contribution or review. In my discussion of the book I will concentrate on the sociolinguistic and phonetic aspects of the contributed articles.

THE NOTION OF AUSTRALASIAN ENGLISH

It is a sociolinguistic problem to define the meaning of the term Australasian English. For the academic community, the notion has to be defined either from the point of view of the meaning that language specialists would like to give to the term or from the point of view of the meanings given to it by other groups of speakers.

In English Transported the term seems to include New Guinea Pidgin, but not some Aboriginal English variety (e.g. Neo-Nyungar). Notes on Torres Strait islanders' "English" are included but not a report on Australian mainland Aboriginal English. It is, however, very pleasing to see that Clyne has contributed a paper on the English of migrants to Australia and that Kaldor examines the difficulties in using English met by Asian students temporarily studying in Australia.

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* This paper is a review article of English Transported. Essays on Australasian English. Ramson, W. S. (ed.). Canberra: Australian National University Press, xii, 243 pages, 1970.

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In view of inclusion of these two articles, the book title may be understood as defining the English of non-native temporary speakers as a kind of Australasian English.

Laycock, himself a supporter of Pidgin as a suitable means of national communication in New Guinea, does not want to name Pidgin a variety of English (the reviewed volume, page 103). His argument is linguistic but one can also maintain that sociolinguistically English in New Guinea belongs to the native speech repertoire mainly by virtue of being a Language of Wider Communication, and perhaps also a High variety. The LWC-function of English provides however only a weak reason for including Pidgin under the label "Australasian" - we do not include other indigenous Pacific languages just because English is used as an LWC in their speech communities - and the High variety function testifies against including Pidgin because English opposes Pidgin in terms of function. Including Pidgin is sociolinguistically equivalent to accepting an Aboriginal vernacular as a variety of Australasian English. A stronger claim for inclusion can be made for Aboriginal English. Many Australian Aboriginal speech communities use varieties of Aboriginal English instead of "white" English, opposing the vernaculars or pidgin/creole English-based speech varieties by function.

The development of a more sophisticated model of speech variation (sociolinguistics) and field studies of the various speech communities in (the geographical area of) Australasia will provide the necessary criteria for defining expressions that classify speech varieties, such as "Australasian English".

In his editor's foreword, Ramson considers it "logical" to study varieties of English in Australasia together. This makes historical sense, and certainly sociopolitical sense, but I would disagree if he implied that there is a methodological necessity to do so: "As it is, the contacts between the two countries (Australia and New Zealand) have been so close that it is doubtful if one dialect can be fully recorded without prior or concurrent knowledge of the other." (page v). Although it cannot be denied that the linguistic links between Australia and New Zealand are strong (intercommunication), I can see no such exclusive need in synchronic study.

Ramson's plea for further research is historically oriented and this with regard to such an important matter as the description of present-day New Zealand speech. After all, two major projects on Australian English are historical: projects on an historical dictionary of Australian English, and on variation by the Australian Language Research Centre at the University of Sydney. Since funds are limited and specialists scarce, could one not instead come with the opposite plea: for synchronically descriptive or even future-orientated (particularly for migrant study) research?

I will discuss each paper in turn.

1. THE AUSTRALIAN ACCENT (A. G. Mitchell)

Mitchell, Baker, and other scholars have contributed immensely to creating a healthy Australian feeling of linguistic independence. In national development there is a need for linguistic self-determination or self-definition, and Mitchell's contribution is highly significant.

There comes a point, however, in the development of a speech community, when depth of emotion and praise of independence are not sufficient agents. An Australian manner of speaking has been firmly established and accepted, and there is now a need for rational, perhaps detached, study of the Australian speech community. It is from this latter point of view that I will comment on Mitchell's 1960 address.

One of Mitchell's basic assumptions seems to be that each speaker commands only one of the set of three (basic) varieties of Australian English: from Educated to Broad. In reality, however, the same speaker often knows both 'general' and 'broad' varieties and a rather more 'educated' variety of English as well, or even manages to pass as an educated southern English speaker on occasion! Socio-linguistic notions of repertoire, range etc. are now available to assist in further development of sociolectal investigation. For a general introduction to these concepts I recommend Joshua A. Fishman's book Sociolinguistics (Newbury House 1970).

Mitchell's address reprinted in this volume (originally 1960) reports on the background and preliminary findings of his and Delbridge's report The Speech of Australian Adolescents (Sydney 1965). The report will remain as a landmark in the development of study of Australian English, but there are sociolinguistic and phonetic reasons for approaching the results with caution.

Mitchell excludes physiologically and psychologically motivated "vocal differences" from proper study because they are not "linguistic" variations (page 5).

He also wants to get rid of "emphatica": "Variations in pitch, in loudness, in rythm, that are not parts of the general phonological system but vary unsystematically from one individual to another". The explanation, two sentences along, does not help to clarify: "Or the same person may say it now in one way and now in another, but we take it to be said in the same accent or style." Mitchell reveals some prejudice also by his third proposal: "There is good reason, too, for eliminating those elisions, assimilations, and weakening of consonants that are commonly regarded as signs of careless or illiterate speech."

The impressive number of ten thousand speakers whose speech Mitchell claims to have analysed together with Delbridge in their field study seems to need some discounting: first, Delbridge himself gives a lower number: "more than seven thousand recorded conversations" (the reviewed volume page 18);

secondly, the research report states on page 34 that "After listening to and comparing large numbers of [i] vowels we were satisfied that the whole range of sounds would be conveniently grouped in three varieties: ...The diaphones of the remaining members of the set of six [vowels] may be dealt with similarly." This raises the question whether speakers were not given a label only on the basis of overall impression (of Broad, General, Cultivated and modifications).

When commenting on methodological principles of his and Delbridge's field study in the address reprinted here Mitchell further says: "It is clear enough, then, that if we distinguish three styles of speech, shading into one another, we shall be able to account adequately for the pattern of speech variation in Australia.

The overwhelming proportion of speakers speak General Australian - the proportions speaking Cultivated Australian and Broad Australian are small by comparison." (page 7) and continues on the same page: "By working over the data we may arrive at a fuller and a more refined list of the phonological elements which, in related variation, show up the differences between these styles of speech." Statements of this type give the impression that the Mitchell and Delbridge procedure was circular: defining the three styles first, and without pursuing the analysis simply reiterating the few criteria previously selected for defining the three styles.

It would be fascinating to continue studies of sociolectal variation of English in Australia in a manner similar to the work begun by William Labov in his The Social Stratification of English in New York City (Urban Language Series 1, Washington D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics 1966).

The insistence by Mitchell on the regional uniformity of Australian English is an a priori guess which unfortunately remains untested. Mitchell says (page 7): "...there may be one or two habits characteristic of some people in South Australia, and we have yet to see how these may be sifted out. Apart from that, there is no suggestion anywhere of any regional variation. Everywhere we find the three recognisable types of speech, varying only in their proportions."

Delbridge says (the reviewed volume...page 20) "there emerged no geographical or cultural boundaries for diaphones, and speakers of each of the main varieties could be found anywhere within the same city or town, the same school or even the same family."

The South Australian pronunciation of /ou/ is the only exception. But Delbridge rejects the regionality of the South Australian /ou/phones: "But this proved to be a social feature, rather than a regional one, since it was found only among girls in independent schools. It is occasionally heard in other parts of Australia, but only among women and girls educated in independent schools." (page 20). Surely this is the way South Australian school girls from independent schools may speak in the kind of speech situation that the recordings represent. And why should their choice of speech exclude an occurrence elsewhere of similar phones even in similar groups of speakers? (After all, the presence of a Stockholm Swedish speaker in Melbourne does not invalidate the Stockholm dialect of Swedish).

Our impression is that no systematic attempt was made to study regional variability of pronunciation. The speech sample would in any case not have been very suitable for such a purpose; it is not even suitable for studies of social variation of speaking since the recordings were all made under similar circumstances, with a high-school student's teacher interviewing the student in a school office. This social situation suggests one speech variety only, although other variables such as topic, degree of familiarity, etc. may cause lack of homogeneity in the sample. Unfortunately from the point of view of studying regional variation, the recording situation would appear to condition a strongly non-local variety of speech, in accordance with general theory of speech variation.

Delbridge seems aware of the situational conditioning of speech variability. He quotes Bernard: "...suitable speakers, Broad when he first found them, became General by the time he could get them into the laboratory." (page 19).

We should also note that Mitchell reserves the term "dialect" for cases of pronunciation differences only.

Mitchell's paper represents one stage in the development of the study of Australian speech variation. Dialect studies in Australia would - because of the relatively limited amount of variation, in space or kind - have to be carried out using very sensitive methods. One could for instance test native hearers in order to reveal dialect differences. A properly controlled and statistically correct sample and analysis of speech and listener responses as briefly outlined in my article "There are no subjective dialects" (Kivung 1:38-42 1968) would therefore probably give valid results.

2. THE RECENT STUDY OF SPOKEN AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH (A. Delbridge)

After a theoretically oriented introduction (in which I do not understand what brings Delbridge and Lieberman together as adherents of the same "'motor theory' school"), Delbridge surveys in turn the study of Australian English "dialect features, phonology, origins and development, prosodic and paralinguistic features, and speech perception."

The value of Delbridge's survey written for this volume would have been enhanced if a more representative selection of work had been included. On the other hand, Delbridge selects work with which he considers himself thoroughly familiar, and keeps a future-oriented perspective throughout.

Most of the section on dialect features is devoted to a reiteration of the main findings of Mitchell and Delbridge's report on Australian English pronunciation. I have discussed that study above.

He also mentions Bernard's study of the phonetics of the postulated three varieties of Australian English. I disagree with Delbridge's treatment of Bernard's study (page 21) as counterevidence to previous articulatory and auditory analysis, when it can be supplementary only. Also, I cannot agree with Delbridge's allegations that informants behave inappropriately: "...[Bernard gave] an impressive account of the difficulties involved in getting them [informant voices], including the severe phonetic inconstancy of so many of the speakers."

As for the origins and development section, Delbridge mainly discusses a theory of Bernard's, that an "up-grading" process (from Broad to General to Cultivated) is under way. There are strong arguments contrary to this sociolinguistic proposition. Delbridge includes Bernard's theory despite his own remark: "If Bernard's suggestions have any prophetic value, it may not be too fanciful to think of Australians going leap-frogging into a future of linguistic refinement in which the principle that 'the last shall be first' will put the cycle of our speech varieties into perpetual motion. Fortunately, good sense is likely to prevail." (page 25).

In the section on prosodic and paralinguistic features Delbridge finds that prosody and paralanguage have not been studied in Australia until very recently. It will be difficult to agree with Delbridge's attempt to put the blame on linguistics for this failure: "...the absence of a persuasive theory of phonation and of the factors involved in changes of intensity and fundamental frequency of voice." (page 26). Is it not that Australia so far may have been lacking phoneticians who appreciate available theories?

Delbridge further quotes Bernard, first positively concerning the "unusually slow and rhythmically even" character of Australian English, but then withdraws his generalization by stating "but the size of the average divergence from mean figures left him [Bernard] persuaded that rate is more an index of personality than of dialect." (page 27).

3. NINETEENTH-CENTURY AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH (W.S. Ramson)
4. TWENTIETH-CENTURY AUSTRALIAN IDIOM (J. S. Gunn)

Ramson's article is an easy to read feature on a selection of Australian English words. While knocking Baker for being inappropriately "patriotic" in his comments on vocabulary, Ramson seems to take an attitude of aloofness and detachment. It is unfortunate if Ramson does not see the value of studying "patriotic" works as agents in creating support for the study of Australian English. Could a scholar obtain funds for, say, writing an Australian English historical dictionary unless there is societal "patriotism" justifying the expense? Myth-building about language is as natural as the new vocabulary itself. Why would a scholar feel the need to exclude and distinguish from his own work the humorous, mythical accounts of Australian English by O'Grady and Lauder? Their misconceptions make a fascinating study, and their work probably contributes to the support and appreciation of the scientific study of Australian English.

Gunn's article is written in much the same style as Ramson's, a commentary to lists of words with occasional serious notes. His search for "Australianisms" makes it difficult to discuss levels of usage - historical criteria hardly clarify current usage. Nevertheless, Gunn is aware of the need for study of present-day distribution of vocabulary. But how Gunn can maintain that studies of "less slangy terms" must be conducted on historical principles, I cannot understand.

Gunn also says that there are demonstrable regional differences in vocabulary distribution (page 64), and that such differences constitute sufficient basis for establishing dialects of Australian English. Baker has maintained this since he started writing on Australian English and it is valuable to read it here also.

5. ENGLISH AS IT IS SPOKEN IN NEW ZEALAND (J. A. W. Bennett)

Bennett's reprinted article reads much like a miniature-Baker, with brief and popular sections on pronunciation, vocabulary, colloquialisms and slang, Maori-influence, and trade words. A New Zealand Mitchell would have plenty to say about Bennett's "physical or psychological factors" accounting for the "clenched teeth" of New Zealand pronunciation (page 71), and much else.

6. NEW ZEALAND ENGLISH TODAY (G. W. Turner)

Turner's article adds material on New Zealand pronunciation - in a more precise manner than Bennett - and vocabulary. Some neglected and very interesting areas of the sociolinguistic study of English varieties are brought into focus, namely conscious creation of trade names (page 97) and problems of language policy (page 100), here pronunciations of Maori place names. Turner does not a priori exclude regionalisms from study, and consequently enlightens us on regional differences of vocabulary and pronunciation. He quotes Mitchell and Delbridge denying the existence of dialects in Australian English, but still maintains that particularly in South Australia there is an "exaggeratedly dark, almost vocalic, pronunciation with accompanying retraction of the vowel" of /l/in words such as milk. (Another of Baker's observations that at long last seem to penetrate the literature, cf. S. J. Baker, The Australian Language, 2nd edition 1966, page 450).

7. PIDGIN ENGLISH IN NEW GUINEA (Don Laycock)

Laycock introduces his article on New Guinea Pidgin by a general survey of theories of origins of pidgins and creoles. May I remark in passing that in doing so he eliminates the reasons for including New Guinea Pidgin in the present volume (page 103): "... it is not realistic to regard Melanesian Pidgin English as a form of English, ...Nor can Melanesian Pidgin English be regarded as a form of any Melanesian language...".

In what follows, Laycock presents a clear and informed survey of attitudes, policies and prospects for Pidgin and includes some briefer remarks characterising it in linguistic terms.

A couple of important mementoes worth amplifying are for instance (page 105) "[Pidgin] tended to be used more as a means of communication between natives of quite diverse linguistic backgrounds, rather than as the vehicle of commands of white overseers." or (page 106) "[Pidgin] is now spoken by well over half a million people in the Territory - for the most part indigenes - and is thus far and away the majority language of Papua-New Guinea, with over twice as many speakers as English...".

There are some humorous jewels in Laycock's article, see notes 26 and 31 on page 108 or note 37 on page 110.

In relating Pidgin to Australian Aboriginal pidgin, I feel that Laycock may be too bold in stating that "no elements in modern New Guinea Pidgin...are attributable to the influence of Australian Pidgin English." It is at least true that there are corresponding linguistic features of diverse kinds - and it is also true that Australian Aboriginal Pidgin has not been studied very thoroughly. The other point concerns the the dinstinction between Aboriginal Pidgin and "broken English" (page 115.)

Since Laycock (although he does not give such a reference) seems to adhere to Stewart's "A Sociolinguistic Typology for Describing National Multilingualism",(in J. A. Fishman (ed.), Readings in the Sociology of Language. Mouton, The Hague, 1968, pages 531-545) definitions of the terms "pidgin" and "creole" he will also have to recognise the social features entering their definition. Diglossia expressed by "white" English and some Aboriginal variety of English is a sufficient social requirement for using the term "pidgin" for the latter variety.

Laycock may like to resolve a terminological difficulty (page 104) - referring to Hall's claim that a pidgin develops in the course of some hours (months) - by introducing Stewart's term marginal variety. The term marginal designates transient speech varieties that develop in the short run, but which may by social processes be propagated and established as pidgins in the long run.

The phonetic notes are brief. I would like to know more about the vowel qualities of hat "hot"/hat "hard" etc. (page 113), or generally more about the phonology.

Laycock calls the alternation between resa "razor"/ resarim "shave" etc. an 'anomaly' (page 114). But can this alternation not be treated as a morphophonemic phenomenon so that the verb is derived from the noun by a simple rule (or two - if r-insertion is independent of -im-suffication)? Or, better still, by postulating a base form with -r, resar, to which a verb formation rule suffixes -im and another rule deletes r if the suffix was not added:

(1) r — Ø /--#

Laycock's bibliography on the history and development of Pidgin in New Guinea is exemplary, both as a research tool, and to support the article.

8. MIGRANT ENGLISH IN AUSTRALIA (Michael G. Clyne)

Clyne's contribution on Migrant English is biassed towards locating basic psycholinguistic research problems and exploring how the study of migrants' speech can help solving such problems. Personaliy I would rather support socio-linguistic description (of the type hinted at by Clyne on pages 128 and 129) - a task which would add to our knowledge of Australian society and help solve migrants' communication problems.

My sociolinguistic and empirical preferences also prevent me from wholeheartedly agreeing with Clyne's suggestion that contrastive analyses between Australian English and the mother tongues of migrants are "an essential prerequisite" for the solving of migrant language problems (page 125). It is not so much the abstract a priori comparison of languages that is needed in Australia, but field research on how migrants actually speak and what communication difficulties they have. Not only are some kinds of contrastive analysis of doubtful value in language teaching (cf. Namser, William and Slama-Cazacu, Tatiana, "A Contribtuion to Contrastive Linguistics (A Psycholinguistic Approach: Contact Analysis)" Revue Roumaine de linguistique 15:2:101-128, 1970) abstracting from time and speakers, but it also shies away from reality.

I certainly cannot agree with the suggestion in Clyne's concluding remarks that the establishment of archives will contribute much to an understanding of migrants' language problems (or even to the solving of psycholinguistic research problems for that matter). For sociolinguistics we need comprehensive and well-defined surveying of speech and speaking, and for

psycholinguistics it would seem that experiments are indispensable - in both cases not archives but theory in support.

9. INFORMAL ENGLISH IN THE TORRES STRAITS (T. E. Dutton)

Dutton's article discusses "Informal English" in the Torres Straits. I shall not comment on Dutton's paper from a sociolinguistic point of view, but wish to refer instead to my paper on Australian Aboriginal speech variation (quoted by Dutton). The material accounted for by Dutton derives from "short recordings of from five to ten minutes' duration... of groups of children (mostly males) aged between twelve and fourteen years". Dutton notes that the speech sample is small and cannot safely be treated as structurally uniform (page 143). The body of his article includes some major observations on the sound system, syntax, morphology and lexicon of one assumed variety of Torres Straits speech.

10. A COMPARISON OF SPOKEN AND WRITTEN ENGLISH: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED METHOD OF LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION (E. H. Flint)

Flint's study has methodological interest for a Halliday-trained linguist to see how comparative statements can be developed in Halliday's terminology.

Flint introduces his article by some odd remarks about generative-transformational grammar, then switches to summarising Halliday's theory. Flint's attempt at summarising Halliday's theory culminates in an acceptance of it as <u>the</u> linguistic theory: "Halliday's linguistic theory not only provides for a detailed description of all grammatical units of the hierarchy, thus enabling deep and surface structure relations to be discerned. It also offers, in its interlevel of context, opportunity for complete contextual description and for the correlation of grammar and semantics." (page 166). The main results are summarised on page 170.

11. THE LANGUAGE OF AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE (G. K. W. Johnston)

Johnston discusses the relationship of literary styles to different colloquial and non-colloquial varieties of language. He exemplifies the development and definition of an Australian language of poetry and prose founding itself on colloquial language resources. In turn, cultural development of a society motivates its language resources. Johnston traces by examples the development of colonial Australia into a more mature society and the simultaneous emergence of an Australian literature.

12. ASIAN STUDENTS AND AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH (Susan Kaldor)

Kaldor's article deals with a most important area of research, generally and for Australia. One may ask why, in a book on Australasian English, communication problems of temporary speakers are attended to; but it is evident that from the point of view of the Australian speech community this is a real and important issue. Kaldor's article is particularly valuable in the reviewed volume as it explicitly and well shows the importance of understanding not only the codes of speakers, but also their speaking behaviour (cf. pages 209, 211, 219). Invitations, summonses etc. are phrased by foreign speakers in a different manner from native Australian speakers. In order to help accommodate a visitor it will be necessary to understand such speaking differences.

There is no mention in the article of expectations of Australian speakers vis-à-vis foreign speakers, or adjustment according to some set of rules in speaking to foreigners. I should like to encourage Kaldor to include this matter in her future research.

13. A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH (David Blair)

The bibliography of Australian English that concludes the book is very useful. I would welcome the expansion and continuation of this bibliography, and perhaps its regular publication and distribution by some Australasian journal.

I find the arrangement of titles and the index quite functional. In his remarks Blair says that he would include articles that do not deal with Australian English if they were written by "well-known Australian scholars". There is possibly a justification for this, but should an enlarged or continued version of the present bibliography appear, I suggest that a separate section be created for this purpose: "Well-known Australian scholars on matters not Australian-English"!

There is already sufficient material to justify a separate "English in Aboriginal speech communities" section (for instance entries 001, 011, 012, 019, 020). The creation of such a section would clean up the "General" section considerably.

The bibliography needed updating even before printing. This, however, is very natural, and only makes me feel even more strongly that it should be continued and regularly distributed.

I list below some new items that might be included:

Adams, C. M. 1969

A Survey of Australian English Intonation. Phonetica 20:81-130.

Andreoni, G. 1967

Australitalian. University Studies in History 5:1.

Andreoni, G. 1969

Caratteristiche dell'Australitalian. Quaderni No. 4.

Andreoni, G. 1969

Alcuni verbi dell'Australitalian. Te Reo 12:72-75.

Bernard, J. R. L. B. 1970

A Cine-X-Ray Study of Some Sounds of Australian English. Phonetica 21:138-150.

Bernard, J. R. L. B. 1970

On Nucleus Component Duration. Language and Speech 13:2:89-101.

Burgess, O. N. 1969

A Spectrographic Investigation of Some Diphthongal Phonemes in Australian English. Language and Speech 12:238-246.

Burgess, O. N. 1970

Particle-Verb Transformations in Australian English AUMLA 33:61-66

Delbridge, A. n.d.

A Preliminary Experiment on the Perception of Intonation among Some Australian Speakers. AULLA Proceedings and Papers of the Eleventh Congress at the University of Sydney 16-23 August, 1967. Pages 352-361.

Dutton, T. E. 1969

The Informal English Speech of Palm Island Aboriginal Children, North Queensland. Journal of English Linguistics 3:18-36.

Eagleson, R. n.d.

Prolegomena to a Dictionary of Australian English. AULLA Proceedings and Papers of the Eleventh Congress at the University of Sydney 16-23 August, 1967. Pages 362-372.

Kijlstra, H. E. 1969

Review of title 197. Linguistics 50:119-123.

Massola, Aldo 1968

Aboriginal Place Names of South-East Australia and their Meanings. Lansdowne.

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